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MAJOR ROBERT M. WOODS.

SKETCH OF ROBERT MANN WOODS

By CHARLES E. COX

Robert Mann Woods was born in Greenville, Pa., April 17, 1840. Son of William J. and Sarah Mann Woods. He was brought to Barry, Pike County, Ill., in 1842 and to Pittsfield in 1843, to the Mound Farm, five miles from Barry, in 1847; to Canton, Ill., in 1848, and to Galesburg in 1849. He attended Knox College and learned the printing trade.

In 1858 he joined his father's family at College Springs, Iowa, and attended Amity College, of which his father was one of the founders.

In the spring of 1861 he went to Springfield, Ill., to study law with Hay, Campbell and Cullom. On the breaking out of the Civil War, he entered the State Quartermaster General's Office.

In 1862, an acting ordinance officer, he was sent to Louisville, Ky., and armed the 88th and 104th Illinois regiments. In 1863 he was sent by Governor Yates to inspect the hospitals on the Ohio river where there were many Illinois sick and wounded.

After this he was engaged in mustering troops into the U. S. service until promoted into the office of Governor Yates. Here in the summer of 1864 he was appointed Adjutant of the 64th Illinois "Yates' Sharp Shooters," to rank from June 27, 1864, vice Hinkley, killed in action. He joined the regiment at East Point. He took part in the pursuit of General Hood's army toward Chattanooga. He was in the all night march around Kenesaw Mountain to the relief of General Carse at Allatoona Pass, where Sherman signalled from the top of Kenesaw, "Hold the fort, I am coming!"

He was in the engagement at Snake Creek Gap, where the regiment armed with the sixteen shooter Henry rifles, continually held the skirmish line.

Adjutant Woods was in Sherman's march from Atlanta to the Sea and the siege and capture of Savannah. He was in the campaign of the Carolinas. In the engagement of February 3, 1865, at Salkehatchie, where the Division waded over a mile in ice cold water from two to four feet deep, and engaged the enemy on the opposite bank. Lieutenant Woods was in charge of the skirmish line and for his part received honorable mention from Major General Giles A. Smith, commanding.

Lieut. Woods was in the great battle of Bentonville, N. C., March 21, and was actively engaged in the skirmish line, losing his horse, which was shot during the battle. Following this Lieut. Woods was brevetted Captain and Major by the President.

Major Woods was in the grand review at Washington and coming with Sherman's Army to Louisville, Ky., was engaged in mustering out troops, and was the last mustering officer in the field in the Army of the Tennessee.

Returning to Springfield, Major Woods was appointed by Adjutant General Haynie to write the history of the Illinois Regiments for the adjutant general's reports. While in this work in the spring of 1866 he assisted Dr. B. F. Stephenson, Col. John M. Snyder and others in organizing the Grand Army of the Republic, becoming the first Adjutant General.

In 1867 Major Woods moved to Chicago and engaged in mercantile pursuits. On October 7, 1867, he married Miss May Florence Miner. They had two children, Alice May and Miner Robert.

October 11, 1871, Major Woods was appointed chief clerk of the Chicago Relief and Aid Society, where he served till in 1873 he was appointed chief clerk of the U. S. Government Post Office and Custom House building. In 1877 he was appointed chief clerk of the Insurance Department, in the State Auditor's office. And in 1877 bought the Joliet Daily

Republican, which paper he published until he retired from active business in 1893, having completed forty years of active, vigorous business life.

Robert Mann Woods died suddenly of heart disease in Chicago, May 29, 1919.

An old friend on learning of the death of Major Woods, paid tribute to his memory as follows:

"Through the kindness of Mrs. E. P. Stockton I have received the newspaper clipping concerning Major Woods' death. I hasten to sincerely thank you for the same. I greatly prize the clipping and your kindness in sending it. It was my great pleasure to have Robert Mann Woods, during his long life a visitor a few times in my home. Not often, but enough to learn to dearly love him. I think but few persons carry with them so much sunshine as he did. His happy disposition, his loyalty to his country, and his real manhood made him a welcome guest wherever he went. Surely the world is better and happier for his having lived."

Another old friend wrote with appreciation of Robert Mann Woods as follows:

53 South Springs Avenue, La Grange, Illinois,
Sunday, June 1st, 1919—10 A. M.

Mr. and Mrs. Miner R. Woods,
6622 University Avenue,
Chicago, Illinois.

My Dear Mr. and Mrs. Woods and Family:

I cannot be with you in person this sad hour, but my heart is with you in deepest sympathy. My daughter is taking down this message, at this hour. I am lying in bed, dictating it. Ever since the Major came up from Pittsfield, in April, I had wanted him to come out here and get rested in this beautiful place, but had been unable to do so. It is very sad to have such a tragic ending to such a beautiful and wonderful and self-sacrificing life, as your father has lived.

I have known him ever since my school days in Springfield, nearly 60 years ago, and we have been close friends, as

you well know. His devotion to me could not have been more sincere and earnest, if he were my own brother. I have before me a letter which he wrote me last Sunday, in which he outlined his program for the week, saying that he expected to be with me early this week. How little we know what lies before us! How little any of us thought of this sad ending—so sudden. The Major wrote and said he would like to come out to La Grange next week, and further on he says: "I want to look you over to see if a jaunt to Macatawa, in July, would be too strenuous. Well, plenty of time later on to look that up." The Major was thinking of me constantly—and planning. The week which he spent with me last Summer, at Castle Park, after he had just returned from New York, after a two months' visit; the two visits to see me, when up at Kenosha, leaving there one night in a rain storm, at eight o'clock; the beautiful and interesting letters he wrote me from Pittsfield, which cheered me greatly and helped me to bear my trouble, and his constant letters since, all show a devotion which I can never forget.

There is one thing that I am truly thankful for—and that is—the Major has sent me a sketch of his life, which I have before me, and also a written memo of events that transpired at Springfield, in my school days—which will be of great value and help to me, in preparing a sketch of my life, which I am trying to write, to leave to my children. I would be very glad if you would save me a copy of his Illinois Day speech, at Los Angeles, if you have one to spare, or any other similar address, that you may have printed copies of; his lectures in the two months that he spent with me in Florida, a year ago for the Red Cross, were wonderful, inspiring—and we succeeded in turning over to the Red Cross quite a large fund, as the result of them. He never seemed to think of himself—when on duty for the public. I recall one night in which he and I rode from Fruitland Park to Ocala—34 miles, in auto, leaving Fruitland Park at 4:00 P. M., taking supper at Ocala Hotel, and resting in a room furnished by the Red Cross for us there—the Major delivering his lecture at the Opera House, and we riding back that

34 miles in a wind blowing a gale from northwest, arriving at Fruitland Park after midnight. The Major said he didn't get warm from that trip for two days, and I am sure I did not.

The wonderful reception the veterans gave him at St. Petersburg and at Tampa, in the two weeks we spent there together, was truly touching. He was entertained by the best and most prominent citizens of both cities, and his address on Lincoln's Birthday, before the Veterans of the Southern Confederacy and the G. A. R., was one of the most inspiring, most touching addresses I ever listened to. Those old Veterans of both the North and the South, were on their feet, in applause of Lincoln, almost half the time, and yet the Major made the last address of the day, and the audience was tired. I can never forget the applause.

It is my hope to write a tribute to the Major, to be sent to Bartleson Post, in Joliet, or to whatever Post he was affiliated with in Chicago. I should like from you, suggestions as to whom to send it—or where. I shall have to take plenty of time, as, of course, I am very weak.

Did the Major have any recent photos of himself? If so, I would like to have one. You have, I believe, his picture, taken with me, at Castle Park last July.

Again extending my sincere sympathy in this sad hour, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

EDWARD B. SPRINGER.